

U.S. EMBASSY
ABU DHABI

Ramadan
Schedule:

This year, Ramadan falls from Wednesday, July 10, to approximately Wednesday, August 9. Please be aware that our public hours will change as indicated.

American Citizen Services: 12:00 pm until 2:00 pm (by appointment only)

Passport return will be from 1:30 pm until 2:30 pm

Immigrant Visa: 8:00 am until 10:00 am (by appointment only)

Non-Immigrant Visa: 8:30 am until 11:00 am (by appointment only)

رمضان
كريم!

Ramadan
Kareem!



American Citizen Services

JULY 2013

Ramadan in Abu Dhabi

The Holy Month of Ramadan is a solemn time of the year and sensitivities are heightened. Violating rules of behavior may be deemed offensive. This can land you in hot water with the authorities, ranging from warnings or fines issued by the government.

DOs

- **Do** say “*Ramadan Kareem*” to Muslim friends and colleagues.
- **Do** be aware that office hours will change which could in turn affect traffic patterns.
- **Do** avoid driving close to sunset. It can be hazardous during this time as many drivers will not have had anything to eat or drink all day, so exercise caution.
- **Do** dress conservatively. This law is applicable all year round, however during Ramadan, modesty is greatly appreciated.
- **Do** give to the poor and help the needy. Ramadan is renowned for its charitable nature. Small gestures go a long way.
- **Do** make the most of the community spirit and sumptuous food to be found in the Iftar tents at the city’s hotels. It’s a great opportunity to relax, play games, and experience traditional Arabic hospitality.

DON'Ts

- **Don't** dance, sing, or be intoxicated in public at any time. Most major nightclubs will close for Ramadan. Bars and pubs will generally open only after dark.
- **Don't** play loud music at any time in your car, on the beach or even at home. You can play music; just make sure it can't be heard by others.
- **Don't** smoke, drink, chew gum or eat in public during daylight hours. This includes when you are driving as well as open office spaces.
- **Don't** swear in public. Blasphemy is always frowned upon, but during Ramadan it is particularly offensive.



Upcoming holiday Schedule

Embassy Closed:

- August 11* — Eid Al Fitr
- September 1—Labor Day
- October 13—Columbus Day
- October 14*—Arafat (Hajj) Day
- October 15-17* - Eid Al Adha

** Denotes UAE religious holidays which are dependent upon the sighting of the moon and are likely to vary from the above estimated dates.*

The Smart Traveler App

Available for both Android and iPhone, provides easy access to your STEP account and allows you to create personal itineraries, add notes, and organize your trips. Not only that, but it provides quick access to our Facebook and Twitter pages.



MERS—The novel (new) Coronavirus

Cases of respiratory illness caused by a new coronavirus have been identified in multiple countries.

At this time, WHO and CDC have not issued travel health warnings for any country related to novel coronavirus and CDC does not recommend that anyone change their travel plans because of these cases of the novel coronavirus. CDC recommends that U.S. travelers to countries in or near the Arabian Peninsula monitor their health and see a doctor right away if they develop fever and symptoms of lower respiratory illness, such as cough or shortness of breath. They should tell the doctor about their recent travel.

We strongly recommend that U.S. citizens traveling to or residing in the UAE enroll in the Department of State's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) at <https://step.state.gov/step>. Also regularly monitor the State Department's website at <http://travel.state.gov>, where you can find current Travel Warnings, Travel Alerts, and the Worldwide Caution. Read the Country Specific Information for the UAE. For additional information, refer to "A Safe Trip Abroad" on the State Department's website.

How Can Travelers Protect Themselves?

Taking these everyday actions can help prevent the spread of germs and protect against colds, flu, and other illnesses:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Avoid close contact with sick people
- Be sure you are up-to-date with all of your shots and vaccinations, and if possible, see your healthcare provider at least 4-6 weeks before you travel to get any additional shots. Visit CDC's Traveler's Health website for more information on healthy travel
- If you are sick: cover your mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, avoid contact with other people to keep from infecting them

Stay Connected and Informed

Smart Traveler Enrollment Program

The Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) is a free service provided by the U.S. Government to U.S. citizens who are traveling to, or living in, a foreign country.

STEP allows you to enter information about your upcoming trip abroad so that the Department of State can better assist you in an emergency.

STEP also allows Americans residing abroad to get routine information from the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate. **Please include or update your enrollment with a valid email address. We can't send important information to invalid addresses.**

Let us know you live here.
<https://step.state.gov/>





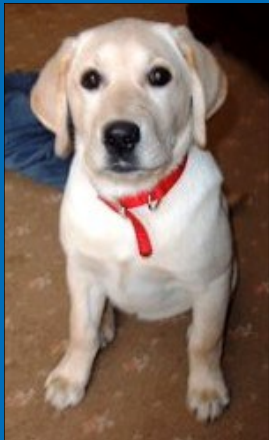
The U.S. Embassy is closed on U.S. and local holidays, we provide only emergency response services outside normal business hours. To book an appointment for an ACS service, please visit <https://evisaforms.state.gov/acs/default.asp?postcode=ABD&appcode=1>

MORE INFORMATION?

Visit our website :

abudhabi.usembassy.gov

Remember to schedule an appointment for American Citizen Services!



Immigration Corner

Green Card Holders

In the Consular Section we get lots of questions about what we can and can't do for U.S. Legal Permanent Residents (green card holders). Our American Citizen Services Unit does not handle routine matters for green card holders. There are, however certain limited services where our Immigrant Visa Unit can assist.

Question: I am a green card holder and am currently living in the UAE for my job. How can I legally stay outside the United States for longer than 1 year without losing my status in the US?

Answer: Questions related to maintaining your legal status in the US should be directed to the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS, <http://www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis>), part of the Department of Homeland Security. The 'Re-entry Permit', which does allow for a stay of up to 2 years outside the United States for green card holders, can **only** be applied for and obtained from inside the United States.

Question: I lost my green card (or it expired) and I need to travel back to the United States soon, what should I do?

Answer: If you lost your green card, or it was stolen or expired, but you have fulfilled all the requirements to maintain your status, you can apply for a document that allows you to return to the U.S., and you can apply for a new green card once you are in the U.S.

More information about these two issues can be found on our FAQ on the Consular Section's website at the US Embassy Abu Dhabi's homepage <http://abudhabi.usembassy.gov/service/frequently-asked-questions--page-1.html>

Applying for a family member to immigrate to the U.S.

Many U.S. citizens and Legal Permanent Residents (green card holders) come to us at the Embassy with questions about how they can get a visa for their relatives to immigrate to the U.S. In the United States, immigration issues are handled by USCIS, part of the Depart-

ment of Homeland Security. USCIS maintains a very helpful website at <http://www.uscis.gov>.

The first step to immigrating is for the U.S. citizen or green card holder to file a petition through USCIS in the United States. It is **not** possible to do this step at our Embassy or Consulate in the UAE, nor is it possible to make the payment here. The only way is to submit the petition and payment through a Chicago lock-box. You can do that via mail; you do not need to be present in the U.S.

Once the petition is approved, it will be sent to our Embassy in Abu Dhabi for an interview with a Consular Officer. This process can take anywhere from 8 months and many years, depending on the relationship between the petitioner and the beneficiary of the petition.

For more information on this issue, please see the detailed FAQ on our website, or contact USCIS directly on www.uscis.gov. We are unfortunately not able to give appointments to talk to people in person about their immigration questions.

Ask the consul:

If you decide to take your pet with you when you go abroad, you should check on the specific requirements that must be met before a pet may be brought into the country.

Many countries have strict quarantine and customs requirements. A listing of foreign embassies and consu-

Traveling with pets? It's not always easy

lates in the U.S. is available at <http://travel.state.gov>, in the section "Country Specific Information".

Note: During a crisis involving the evacuation of U.S. citizens, pets will not normally be permitted on military or charter flights. The pet owner will need to make other arrangements in

order to remove the pet from the area. Service animals, such as dogs, will be accommodated if possible.

Information on bringing pets into the U.S. can be found on the Department of Homeland Security's website.

Article courtesy of Consulate General Dubai

Preparing Makes Sense.

The likelihood that you and your family will survive a house fire depends as much on having a working smoke detector and an exit strategy, as on a well-trained fire department. The same is true for surviving a terrorist attack or other emergency. We must have the tools and plans in place to make it on our own, at least for a period of time, no matter where we are when disaster strikes. Just like having a working smoke detector, preparing for the unexpected makes sense.

Get ready now.

1 Get a Kit of Emergency Supplies.

Be prepared to improvise and use what you have on hand to make it on your own for **at least three days**, maybe longer. While there are many things that might make you more comfortable, think first about fresh water, food and clean air.

Consider two kits. In one, put everything you will need to stay where you are and make it on your own. The other should be a lightweight, smaller version you can take with you if you have to get away.

You'll need a gallon of **water** per person per day for drinking and sanitation. Include in the kits a three day supply of non-perishable **foods** that are easy to store and prepare such as protein bars, dried fruit or canned foods. If you live in a cold weather climate, include **warm clothes** and a sleeping bag for each member of the family.

Some potential terrorist attacks could send tiny microscopic "junk" into the air. Many of these materials can only hurt you if they get into your body, so think about creating a barrier between yourself and any contamination. It's smart to have something for each member of the family that covers **their mouth and nose**, such as two to three layers of a cotton t-shirt, handkerchief or towel or **filter masks**, readily available in hardware stores. It is very important that the mask or other material fit your face snugly so that most of the air you breathe comes through the mask, not around it. Do whatever you can to make the best fit possible for children.

Also, include **duct tape** and **heavyweight garbage bags** or **plastic sheeting** that can be used to seal windows and doors if you need to create a barrier between yourself and any potential contamination outside.

2 Make a Plan

For What You Will Do in an Emergency.

Plan in advance what you will do in an emergency. Be prepared to assess the situation. Use common sense and whatever you have on hand to take care of yourself and your loved ones.

Develop a Family Communications Plan. Your family may not be together when disaster strikes, so plan how you will contact one another and review what you will do in different situations. **Consider a plan where each family member calls, or e-mails, the same friend or relative in the event of an emergency.** It may be easier to make a long-distance phone call than to call across town, so an **out-of-town contact** may be in a better position to communicate among separated family members. Be sure each person knows the phone number and has coins or a prepaid phone card to call the emergency contact. You may have trouble getting through, or the phone system may be down altogether, but be patient.

Depending on your circumstances and the nature of the attack, the first important decision is whether you stay put or get away. You should understand and plan for both possibilities. Use common sense and the information you are learning here to determine if there is immediate danger. **Watch television and listen to the radio for official instructions as they become available.**

Create a Plan to Shelter-in-Place. There are circumstances when staying put and creating a barrier between yourself and potentially contaminated air outside, a process known as sheltering-in-place and sealing the room can be a matter of survival. **If you see large amounts of debris in the air, or if local authorities say the air is badly contaminated, you may want to shelter-in-place and seal the room. Consider precutting plastic sheeting to seal windows, doors and air vents.** Each piece should be several inches larger than the space you want to cover so that you can duct tape it flat against the wall. Label each piece with the location of where it fits.

Use all available information to assess the situation. If you see large amounts of debris in the air, or if local authorities say the air is badly contaminated, you may want to shelter-in-place. Quickly bring your family and pets inside, lock doors, and close windows, air vents and fireplace dampers. Immediately turn off air conditioning, forced air heating systems, exhaust fans and clothes dryers. Take your emergency supplies and go into the room you have designated. Seal all windows, doors and vents. Understand that sealing the room is a temporary measure to create a barrier between you and contaminated air. Watch TV, listen to the radio or check the Internet for instructions.

Create a Plan to Get Away. Plan in advance how you will assemble your family and anticipate where you will go. **Choose several destinations in different directions** so you have

options in an emergency. If you have a car, keep at least a half tank of gas in it at all times. **Become familiar with alternate routes as well as other means of transportation** out of your area. If you do not have a car, plan how you will leave if you have to. **Take your emergency supply kit**, unless you have reason to believe it is contaminated and lock the door behind you. Take pets with you if you are told to evacuate, however, if you are going to a public shelter, keep in mind they may not be allowed inside. If you believe the air may be contaminated, drive with your windows and vents closed and keep the air conditioning and heater turned off. Listen to the radio for instructions.

Know Emergency Plans at School and Work. Think about the places where your family spends time: school, work and other places your family frequents. **Talk to your children's schools and your employer about emergency plans.** Find out how they will communicate with families during an emergency. If you are an employer, be sure you have an emergency preparedness plan. Review and practice it with your employees. A community working together during an emergency also makes sense. **Talk to your neighbors about how you can work together.**

3 Be Informed About What Might Happen.

Some of the things you can do to prepare for the unexpected, such as assembling a supply kit and developing a family communications plan, are the same for both a natural or man-made emergency. However there are significant differences among potential terrorist threats, such as biological, chemical, explosive, nuclear and radiological, which will impact the decisions you make and the actions you take. By beginning a process of learning about these specific threats, you are **preparing yourself** to react in an emergency. Go to www.ready.gov to learn more about potential terrorist threats and other emergencies or call 1-800-BE-READY (1-800-237-3239) for a free brochure.

Be prepared to adapt this information to your personal circumstances and make every effort to follow instructions received from authorities on the scene. With these simple preparations, you can be ready for the unexpected.

Get ready now.

4 Get Involved in Preparing Your Community.

After preparing yourself and your family for possible emergencies, take the next step and get involved in preparing your community. Join **Citizen Corps**, which actively involves citizens in making our communities and our nation safer, stronger and better prepared. We all have a role to play in keeping our hometowns secure from emergencies of all kinds. Citizen Corps works hard to help people prepare, train and volunteer in their communities. Go to www.citizencorps.gov for more information and to get involved.